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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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To whom it may concern:

I am not a reflexive Microsoft hater. I have friends who work there and have worked there, and I know that they have produced some really good software. Having said that, I believe that the "settlement" worked out by Charles James and Microsoft is woefully inadequate.

Microsoft is a company that seems incapable of changing its corporate culture, and that culture is cut-throat and win-at-all-costs. The history of the digital revolution is littered with the corpses of companies who brought out a product, built a business, and provided jobs only to have Microsoft offer a slightly lower-quality (or in some cases much lower-quality) product for free "because it's part of the OS". Bye bye, market. Bye bye, company. Bye bye, jobs.

Microsoft has already ignored one consent decree, and another one with a laughable penalty of "if they break this agreement, it'll be extended for another two years" is the briar patch that the Department of Justice is throwing Br'er Rabbit into. There's no reason whatsoever to think that Microsoft won't just ignore this settlement too, since they're still convinced that they didn't do anything wrong.

The dangers of having an essentially unfettered monopolist provide the software infrastructure for an entire digital economy, which is in their plans, can be illustrated nicely in two words: Windows XP. Or, if you prefer, three words: Internet Information Server. The dangers of having an unscrupulous monopolist in a position of power should be obvious to anyone with two brain cells connected by a synapse.

The states' counter-offer is the least that Microsoft should suffer for flouting the lawful judgements of a duly appointed court. Money alone shouldn't carry the day, unless that's the message you want to send your children. If you won't think of anything else, think of them and think of what it would tell them about breaking the law and getting away with it if you let Microsoft off with the faintest slap on the wrist.

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